

COUNTERATTACK

FACTS TO COMBAT COMMUNISM

55 WEST 42ND STREET, NEW YORK 18, N. Y. LONGACRE 4-1458

Letter No. 59

July 9, 1948

Dear Subscriber:

COMMUNIST PARTY GETS COLD FEET ON QUESTION OF STARTING NEW LABOR FEDERATION. Decision to pull party-controlled unions out of CIO was result of split with Philip Murray on Marshall Plan and Third Party (Counterattack March 19, p 1). But then came Michael J Quill's break with Communists. Quill revealed Wm Z Foster had told him of plan to start new labor federation. Timetable for this plan was ruined by Quill's revolt (Counterattack Apr 30, p 1). His Transport Workers Union will stay in CIO.

And some other union leaders are balking, though they've played ball with the party till now. Most important is Albert Fitzgerald, stooge president of biggest party-line union, CIO United Electrical Workers. Real leaders of UE are two party members, Organization Director Jas J Matles & Sec-Treas Julius Emspak ("Comrade Juniper"). But the great majority of UE members don't want to quit CIO, and Comrade Jimmie and Comrade Juniper aren't strong enough to force them out if the union president bucks. And Fitzgerald has said privately he isn't going to leave CIO.

And other Communist-led CIO unions are losing members, largely on Taft-Hartley non-Communist affidavit issue. So the Communists could only pull out fragments of their unions in a secession move.

Crowning difficulty is Mundt-Nixon bill. This gave Communist Party biggest scare of its life. Foster shrieked continually in Daily Worker for unionists & liberals to oppose the bill. Many of them fell for his agonized pleas. Communist Party will need their help again when bill is revived in Congress. The party can't afford to be isolated now...can't afford to have its few unions shivering alone in a little labor federation. CIO help is indispensable if party is to escape tremendous blow of Mundt-Nixon bill. So secession plan is deferred to a more favorable time.

COMMUNIST PARTY EXPOSES ITSELF AS A FOREIGN AGENT in its comment on split between Yugoslav Communist bosses and Communist Information Bureau.

First of all, to understand party's comment, take a look at statement issued by Cominform. It contains this sentence (as translated by Communist Party of U S A): "It is generally known that when the Bureau was founded the Communist parties accepted the principle that every party is responsible to the Bureau for its activities." In other words, the Cominform is MORE than an information bureau...it's a RULING organization.

Now the Yugoslav Communist leaders have defied orders, and the Cominform charges they have "turned traitors against the international solidarity of working people"...that is, against the Cominform, against Stalin.

And here's what Communist Party of U S A has to say: "The issue was one of democratic discipline which is elementary for Communists and all progressive organizational life." In other words, it's the DUTY of Yugoslav Communist Party to obey the Cominform...that is, to obey Communist Party of

U S S R, which admittedly initiated the dispute with the Yugoslav party bosses. But this means it was also duty of AMERICAN Communist Party to obey Communist International while affiliated with it. Party formally withdrew from Communist International in 1940, after Congress adopted Voorhis foreign agent registration act. This was merely a PRETENDED disaffiliation. Party has kept on obeying orders ever since. In 1943, to kid the U S public, Stalin pretended to dissolve Comintern. In fact he merely put it underground. Last fall Stalin brought chief part of Comintern above ground, in guise of an "information bureau". It included 9 continental European parties.

The parties in England, U S, etc, weren't ordered to join. But they applauded Cominform and now they assail Yugoslav party for disobeying its edicts. Obedience to Cominform...that is, to Stalin...is "democratic discipline" for ALL Communist parties. This is the doctrine proclaimed by Communist Party of U S A. And question now is whether U S has the sense & the WILLPOWER to do something about this foreign agent.

COUNTERATTACK GIVES TESTIMONY TO CONGRESSMEN ON A UNION SITUATION.

A House Labor subcommittee started hearings last week on schemes & conduct of certain Communist-controlled locals of CIO Retail, Wholesale & Dept Store Union (RWDSU). Theodore C Kirkpatrick, managing editor of Counterattack, was subpoenaed as a witness. He went to Washington and told what he knew.

Counterattack has developed its information on this union situation in a number of ways. Through CONFIDENTIAL party documents, now in Counterattack's possession. Through public documents, carefully analyzed & cross-checked. Through confidential statements to us by former party officials.

Kirkpatrick's testimony was garbled a bit in some newspapers. So, to make things clear, here's a summary of what he said:

Communist control in RWDSU is confined to certain locals in NYCity. Leadership of the international union is non-Communist. Even in NYCity most locals aren't in Stalin's hands. But the biggest ones are.

Here's how Communist Party got into the picture. Party has mainly concentrated on heavy industries: mines, transportation, communications, mills, etc. But in 1934 the NYState Labor Commission of the party decided to concentrate on various light industries in NYCity. Motives:

1. To build big mass following that could be used in demonstrations in other industries, and in demonstrations put on by Communist fronts.
2. Build up union treasuries that could be tapped by the party.
3. Recruit party members from the membership of the new unions.

Some of the party big shots were in original conference that laid plans for organizing unions in distributive trades field. Among them were Jack Stachel, one of top leaders of party, and Irving Potash. (Both Stachel & Potash are members of highest party body, Communist Natl Board, often called Politbureau. Stachel is in charge of party's "agitprop" work ...agitation & propaganda. Potash is high officer of CIO Fur & Leather Workers. Both Stachel & Potash are out on bail in deportation cases.)

Among other party leaders in that original confab in 1934 were Rose Wortis, Sam Nessin, Clarina Michelson, Gertrude Lane. Rose Wortis is a commissar who has bossed the comrades in various unions and at times has been the party's top labor authority in NYState. Sam Nessin was later an official of Local 830 of RWDSU. Clarina Michelson & Gertrude Lane were given full responsibility for organizing department stores in NYCity. At the outset they concentrated on stores in Union Square area, such as Hearn's,

Ohrbach's, and Klein's, because Communist strength was greater in that area ...the party hq were within hollering distance. But at the same time the party did preliminary work to organize the uptown stores.

Real Communist success in this organizing work began in 1937, when CIO chartered Retail and Wholesale union. Then the party swung its young locals out of AFL into the CIO union and they began going to town. Reasons:

1. Wages & working conditions in stores were substandard.
2. CIO was popular...many workers were enthusiastic about it.
3. No other union was aggressively organizing distributive trades.

So the Communist organizers collected a lot of members. During late 1930's & early 1940's there were several key people in Communist-led locals who met secretly in conferences & caucuses with party leaders. Among these key people: Arthur Osman, president Wholesale & Warehouse local 65... David Livingston, who is v-p of same local...Nicholas Carnes, president Local 1250, which has contracts with several department stores...Wm Michelson, president Local 2, at Gimbel's and Saks-34th Street stores.

Kirkpatrick provided evidence of party-line actions by 32 leaders of various locals. Among them: Esther Letz of Wholesale & Warehouse local (a secret member of NYState Committee of the party)...Marcella Loring, a v-p of Macy's local, who is wife of Wm Michelson, Communist Party member (see above)...Victor Lopos, another v-p of Macy's local...Saml Lewis, business manager Bloomngdale's local...Sadka Brown, president Stern's local.

Kirkpatrick testified that a confidential party document shows that Communist Party a year ago had 517 members in its Distributive Trades Section and a total membership in Manhattan Borough of 11,080. A handful of party members are often enough to swing a big local into Communist control.

In order to kick the Communists out of power, first thing necessary is to GET THE FACTS. This is what Counterattack has helped Congress to do.

KEN ECKERT TAKES A WALK OUT OF MINE-MILL UNION...AND TAKES SOME LOCALS WITH HIM. Why did Mike Quill break with Communist Party? Because of conflict between pressure from below (his union members) and pressure from above (the party). Why did Joseph Broz, alias Tito, defy Stalin? Same essential reason: pressure from below vs pressure from above. And this also holds true of Ken Eckert.

He used to be Communist Party Sec'y in Toledo. Later he was a leader in Communist-controlled Natl Assn of Die Casters. This union joined Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers, CIO, as a largely autonomous division. Eckert has been head of this division, with hq in Cleveland. Counterattack reported Apr 30 that Eckert was leading a revolt in the union against Communist policy of refusing to sign non-Communist affidavits. He denounced this as suicidal and he dropped out of party because of it. PRIVATELY he has charged Chairman Wm Z Foster & Labor Sec'y John Williamson with "losing all sense of proportion" and with "wrecking their trade union cadres".

Now Eckert has pulled his Casting Division out of Mine-Mill and is reviving Natl Assn of Die Casters. He claims to have 24 locals and he's asking Philip Murray for a CIO charter. Mine-Mill leaders are fighting this... and outcome may be that Eckert will take his locals into another existing CIO union. Last year some Connecticut brass locals and a number of others left Mine-Mill and joined CIO Shipbuilding union, which chartered them as Progressive Metalworkers Council. A score of locals in Utah, Colorado, Tennessee and other states quit Mine-Mill in recent weeks (before Eckert's

bolt). Some have joined Progressive Metalworkers Council. Main motive for secession is non-Communist affidavit issue...inability of locals to use NLRB. Alex Balint, Cleveland Communist and regional director of Mine-Mill union, died July 3 at age of 36, after long sickness. Deportation proceedings have been pending against him. He was one of top Communists in Mine-Mill and one of leading unionists in Ohio. Communist Party praises him and denounces Ken Eckert as "renegade leader of his union". And Mine-Mill is greatly weakened and will be still weaker before year is over.

WHAT'S TO BE DONE WHEN NEWSPAPER REPORTERS ARE COMMUNISTS? This question has been ducked by a lot of publishers & editors. But the editor of Washington Star, B M McKelway, didn't duck it when he found that a reporter, Thos C Buchanan, was a member of Communist Party. McKelway fired him. Buchanan took his case to Washington chapter of American Newspaper Guild. By vote of 5 to 4, Exec Bd of the chapter decided that membership in Communist Party is a "just & sufficient cause" for discharge...and it refused to invoke grievance machinery to get Buchanan's job back for him. Buchanan appealed to the Washington membership in a referendum. Members voted 251 to 163 to sustain the board, reject the Communist.

But national convention of Guild sided with the Communist last week. By overwhelming vote of about 15 to 1 it "urged" the Washington local to process the grievance (it hasn't authority to ORDER this). And it admonished all locals to resist all discharges for "political beliefs".

The Guild is wandering in Alice's Wonderland when it uses words in this way. Who fired Buchanan for his political BELIEFS? He was fired for membership in Communist Party...with all that that connotes. If a newspaper fired a reporter for being a Ku Kluxer, would the Guild go to bat for him? Would it say he was being fired for his "beliefs"? Kluxing is a kind of ACTION. So is Communist Party membership. When a man joins the party he commits himself to certain ACTS. He pays dues...he organizes & propagandizes in his spare time...and he helps the party in any practical way on his WORKING time. If he's a reporter he gives his stories a Communist slant as far as it's safe to do so. He plays up any news that may help the party... he plays down anything that may hurt it. He gives confidential information to Communist papers like Daily Worker and Geo Seldes' newsletter "In Fact".

Any publisher who tolerates a Communist as a reporter or in any other job in editorial department is acting IMMORALLY. It's not only a publisher's right but his DUTY to fire Communists. It's a newspaperman's right & DUTY to OBJECT to working with Communists. The Washington Guild has had long experience with Commies and doesn't want to defend them. By sticking to that position it will earn hearty congratulations.

THINGS TO DO TO BEAT THE COMMUNISTS:

1. If you see any signs of pro-Communist bias in any newspaper story, investigate THOROUGHLY. Don't make any charge unless you're sure. If convinced the party slant was intentional, urge discharge of offender.
2. Subscribe for anti-Communist literature to be sent to libraries in cities, colleges, etc, to combat pro-Communist papers there.

Yours faithfully,

July 9, 1948

Counterattack